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"From the Pastor's Desk"

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IT IS TIME TO STAND UP

I assume that on the minds of most Americans is the Presidential Election which will take place on November 3rd this year. Election Day in the United States of America is always the Tuesday following the first Monday in November. It can fall on or between November 2 and November 8. It is the day when popular ballots are held to select public officials. Some people it is reported are already filling out their ballots.

To us Christians, most of us feel that as far as what is at stake with this election, involves several issues. Naturally the uppermost part that many of us are concerned about is the Presidential race as well as who will be filling the vacancy on the Supreme Court due to the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Her death did not come by surprise for one reason due to her age, but also her failing health. Ginsburg died at her home in Washington, D.C., on September 18, 2020, at the age of 87, from complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer.

As most people know Mrs. Ginsburg was nominated by Mr. Bill Clinton around 1993, during his time in office, and during her tenure wrote several notable majority opinions. Ginsburg spent much of her legal career as an advocate for gender equality and women's rights, winning many arguments before the Supreme Court.

Our President has the legal right to nominate Ginsburg's replacement, which has added to the hysteria among the opposition to do everything they can to stop him from replacing one of the court's four liberal justices with a conservative in the vein of Kavanaugh, or Trump's other appointee, Neil Gorsuch; which would represent one of the most significant ideological shifts on the Supreme Court in decades, legal experts say.

This shift could have major implications for a long list of issues, including **abortion**, voting rights, health care, LGBTQ rights, gun rights and environmental policy. The newly appointed justice may also play a crucial role if the upcoming election is contested. A reliable bloc of conservative justices, who are appointed for life, could make it impossible for the liberal wing of the Democratic Party to enact their outrageous policy goals for decades to come. Never in the history of our nation has so much been at stake.

I believe it is time for professing Christians to awaken out of their sleep and weigh the possibilities of what could happen if the liberal wing of the democrat party has their way in both national and State elections. Many churches are seeing the potential of what could happen and are doing everything in their power to educate their people on how to vote Biblically on the issues before us. One of which is our legal right to practice our religious freedom which has been guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the United States of America.

What concerns me as a Pastor is the lackadaisical attitude of some who seem to be more pre-occupied with what and where they are going to eat for dinner, than this two-party race outcome. Maybe you personally have not felt the pain of those who live in these "democrat run cities" such as in Seattle, Portland, and New York. But believe me, it could happen here, just as easily as there. Nearby, even in Seal Beach-Long Beach, there has been some minor protests. Our city police took command of the situation and did not let it get out of hand. Incidentally, **I support all police departments who risk their lives every day!!!**

This is not the time for us to huddle in fear, or seek to please "*spoil children!*" I heard of late where one child told their parent (s) that they were forbidden to listen to any one who is "Pro-Trump" under any circumstance. Such a behavior is not good for you as a parent to give-in-to and it sure is not good for the child. Such a strong-arm tactic is "**parental abuse**" and kids can go to jail for such. What kind of precedent are we setting for the future of this nation if we coward in fear and intimidation? ***It is time as a child of God to stand up and declare that as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.***

HOW SHOULD WE STAND UP

Recently, I was struck by one line in 1 Samuel 1 when a woman named Hannah had all the harassment she could stand from her rival, a woman named Peninnah. Both women were married to the same man, Elkanah. Peninnah had children and Hannah had none.

However in spite of Hannah's barenness, she still had the love of her husband. But Peninnah could give her husband children, but could not command the kind of love from her husband that Hannah obtained. This created much envy, hatred, and malice in Peninnah. As a result, she took her frustration out on Hannah. The Scripture actually said that Hannah's rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. Peninnah was bitter and hateful that she on purpose would provoke Hannah until she wept and would not eat.

Now, I wonder if this behavior took place out in the open, or behind the scenes because I never hear Elkanah rebuking Peninnah for the pain she was causing Hannah. But neither do I read that Hannah complained to Elkanah about what her rival was doing to her. Sometimes God's children feel the need to bear with suffering in silence. We do know that Elkanah kept asking Hannah as to what was wrong. Hannah, why wepest thou? He asked. "Why eatest thou not? Why is thy heart grieved? And if Hannah was like some she probably would tell him that she felt bad that she could not bear him any children. But note his response. "*Am not I better to thee than ten sons?*"

I think Elkanah was clueless as to what was happening between Hannah and Peninnah. So he assumed she wanted children for her own pleasure...not his. "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" But it was following this conversation that we believe that Hannah decided to take some drastic action. Now some people would assume that Hannah's next step would be to plough into this woman named Peninnah and give her a good verbal tongue lashing. But note what she did. The Scripture said, "***She stood up!***" And when you think you are about to see two women go at it....we are almost taken completely by surprise.

When the verse says the scene shows Hannah not fighting with her rival, but weeping before the Lord in anguish of soul....asking the Almighty God...to look upon his hand maiden's misery and remember me. (1 Sam. 1:10,11) She stood up not to fight with her rival. She stood up to call upon her God to give her the thing that would stop the mouth of her rival, yet at the same time would be used for the glory of God.

"And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." 1 Sam. 1:11

Before she and Elkanah left the house of God that day she received the promise from God that her prayers would be answered and fulfilled....and the mouth of her rival would cease to do her injury anymore.

So when I say it is time to stand up, I am not saying it is time to protest, wear a "Make America Great" cap or tee-shirt. What I am trying to say---it is time for the Body of Christ to enter the sanctuary and intercede with God to spare our nation from what is taking place in government, on Wall Street, in the city slums, the average American city.

Some may not like Trump or some of his ways. I imagine that Hannah had some opinions about Peninnah! But when she stood up she was taking her case to God and in so doing was humbling herself to comply with whatever God wanted. Maybe this is what God wants from us---*not to pick a fight with the opposition.* That is what Hannah's rival wanted. She wanted to bring Hannah down in the eyes of her husband. But Hannah in her wisdom did not go along with that tactic. Why? Because she was a woman that learned somewhere to fight her battles on her knees with God and not with the flesh.

I am not saying that Hannah and Peninnah became the best friends after that. But we know one thing. When Hannah stood up that day she allowed God to have a hand in defeating her rival who found joy in making her miserable. Hannah stopped the devil his tracks. She came out the winner in the end. And incidentally, so did the nation, because that is what brought about the birth of Samuel, one of the greatest prophets and judges that ruled Israel. Let it happen again....may we stand up....and come into His presence behalf of our nation.

Amen.